



Life Course

Childhood Risk Factor

Brief Name

ACE: Experienced Neighborhood Violence

Indicator

Percent of children who witnessed or were victims of community violence.

Description

This is a proxy measure for toxic stress and is included as an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE). This question asks parents, *"Was [child's name] ever the victim of violence or witness any violence in [his/her] neighborhood?"*

WI	US	Best	Worst
7.5%	8.6%	5.2%	16.6%
		NJ	DC

Year

2011/2012

Numerator

Number of children who experienced the ACE

Denominator

Children aged 0-17

Importance

Witnessing violence has been linked to increased child and youth violence, psychological distress and increased mental health issues (Kitzmann, 2003). Witnessing community violence was not an original part of the ACE study, but was added by the National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH), and the World Health Organization's ACE International Questionnaire, as a valid measure of acute and prolonged stress. Neighborhood cohesion provides a sense of "belonging" or "togetherness" among residents, which may be affected by witnessing or experiencing neighborhood violence. A number of studies have observed an association between youth living in a disadvantaged neighborhood and internalizing problems, such as depression and anxiety (Singh, 2012). Actual and perceived neighborhood safety can influence behavior. For example, youth living in neighborhoods where they do not feel safe may be less likely to participate in community activities (Leventhal, 2009).

Limitations

The NSCH is completed by the parent or caregiver, who may not be aware of all of the instances of their child's exposure to community violence.

Source

NSCH 2011/12. Data query from the Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative, Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health website. Retrieved from www.childhealthdata.org. Kitzmann, Katherine M., et al. "Child witnesses to domestic violence: a meta-analytic review." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 71.2 (2003): 339. Singh, Gopal K., and Reem M. Ghandour. "Impact of neighborhood social conditions and household socioeconomic status on behavioral problems among US children." *Maternal and Child Health Journal* 16.1 (2012): 158-169. Leventhal, Tama, Véronique Dupéré, and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn. "Neighborhood influences on adolescent development." *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology* (2009).